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Ed's Letter



Hi all,

Welcome to the October to December 2014 issue of Retro Classics. Yeah, you heard me: the October to December issue. Scary isn't it! Before we know it they'll be sweeping the remains of the witches' hats and pumpkins out of the shops to get ready for the Christmas trees and fairy lights! I'm not sure if it's old age catching up with me or the fact that things are constantly busy around here, but the years are streaking by like sports prototypes on the Mulsanne Straight, and the summer season just seems to fly by far quicker than the winter months do. That said, we can't complain as the show season this year was a cracker, with most of the main car events enjoying great weather and massive turnouts, and the memory of these will definitely help to keep the motivation going through the dark winter months spent out in the garage. Just look at the Kilbroney or Piltown reports in this issue; you can almost feel the warmth of the sun radiating off the page. Ahhh...

The year isn't over yet though, with more than a few events yet to attend as I write. The Gerard Murphy Memorial Run in Ferns, Co. Wexford on the 5th of October has become a perennial favourite at this stage, and is so well-run and full of entertainment for all the family. The Classic Car Sale, Show & Autojumble in the National Show Centre in Swords, Co. Dublin follows on the 12th of October, and should be an extra fun day out as it incorporates both the National Concours Competition and the raffle draw for the Morris Minor convertible for the 'Help Emma Beat It' Fund, with the winning ticket being drawn by RTÉ's Joe Duffy. The second prize of a 6m x 4m Steeltech garage worth €4,500 is also a big draw, and I'd be delighted to be going home with either (although I'm sure my wife would prefer that I won the 5-night stay at the luxury Waterford Castle Lodge or the Apple iPad also on offer). And, as an added bonus, Team PR Reilly have donated two €250 vouchers that will be drawn only between those who buy a ticket at the Swords event.

Less than a week later sees Mondello Park taken over by the craziness that is Retro Stock. Traditionally run at the end of September on a Sunday, this year's has moved to Saturday the 18th of October, and if you're into the likes of the S2000-powered Escort or the spaceframe Manta/Nissan/Honda creation in this issue then you really need to get along to the event; Retro Stock is when these monsters come out to play, and you're bound to go home from it full of mad ideas for engine transplants yourself. I always do! The 26th of October marks the date for the Ballinakill Vintage & Classic Owners Club's massive indoor car show in the Laois Shopping Centre in Portlaoise, which has become a huge success for them as it's out of the weather and has all the facilities you could want right next store. All of the above are just in October, so the year sure isn't over yet!

With that in mind, I'd better let you crack on with this issue, as it's another packed edition with some real jaw-droppers featured. Before I do though, I'd just like to thank all of our readers for their support of the magazine; I got the opportunity to meet lots of you at the shows this summer, and the positive comments are great to hear. We will be looking at the results of the readers' survey once the events die down for the year, and will strive to continue to bring you the kind of magazine you want and deserve.

I hope you enjoy this issue.

Andrew Pollock
Editor

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Ballinakill Indoor Classic Show

The Ballinakill Vintage & Classic Owners Club are currently busy getting ready for the 2014 instalment of their massively popular indoor show at the Laois Shopping Centre in Portlaoise this October Bank Holiday Weekend. This is their third show at this indoor venue, which has proven to be a huge success, and the funds raised will be donated to the Simon charity. Like last year, the show will again feature a number of special displays: the popular small commercial vehicle section is back, and there'll also be a very special Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost, a Bugatti, an Excalibur and lots of other interesting cars. There will be a drivers' draw for all registered entrants, and there will also be a very good selection of autojumble. Please note that this year the shopping centre management have asked the organisers to restrict movement of show cars until after 4pm due to health and safety issues, and they hope people will understand. Like the last two years, the event's proximity to the Laois Shopping Centre means that there's plenty for all family members to see and do during the car show, and of course, the weather doesn't matter as it's all held indoors.

For further information on the Ballinakill Vintage & Classic Owners Club and their upcoming Portlaoise Indoor Motor Show, call Bernie Kilbride on 087 2219098 or see www.ballinakillvcoc.com.



This indoor classic event has really been attracting the crowds since its introduction a couple of years ago, and looks set to build on its winning formula.

John Crossle Passes Away

John Crosslé, founder of the Crosslé Car Company, passed away on the 31st of August last at the age of 82. Previously a highly successful off-road motorcycle racer, in the late fifties John founded the Crosslé Car Company in Holywood, Co. Down on foot of the number of requests he was receiving to build racing cars of the highly successful types he had constructed for his own use; as was popular at the time, these were based on sidevalve Ford 1,172cc cars, and John was able to put the benefit of his racing experience into their design. His order book soon grew, and the explosion in interest in Formula Ford at the end of the sixties saw his 16F model in great demand, even in the US. In the seventies the Crosslé company became synonymous with Formula Ford racing cars, and in later decades trials cars and sports racing cars have followed. Amazingly, over 1,000 race cars of various types have left the small Crosslé works in Holywood since its foundation, and it remains the world's longest-established constructor of racing cars. John had stepped back from the management and ownership of the car-building operations in 1997, selling them to former Formula Ford racer Arnie Black, and in 2012 the reins were taken over by long-time Crosslé racer and enthusiast Paul McMorran, but John still retained a close interest in his old business; hard not to, given that the factory was attached to the side of his house! We were lucky enough to meet John in November 2012 at the occasion of Paul McMorran's appointment as owner, and we're sad that such an iconic figure in not only Irish, but international, motorsport is no longer with us.

In related news, a book by Alan Tyndall of RPM Motorsports fame has just been released that chronicles the history of this, the longest-surviving customer racing car manufacturer in the world. The beautifully-finished and very comprehensive title costs £60 + P&P, and can be ordered at www.rpm-motorsport.com.



John (centre) in late 2012 with then new Crosslé Car Company owner Paul McMorran (left) and former owner Arnie Black (right), and some of the company's legendary products.

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Top Ghia

Words by Andrew Pollock, Photos by Reinis Babrovskis

When you've waited almost twenty years for your dream car the end results tend to be pretty special. This is certainly the case for Matt Donnelly's stunning VW Karmann Ghia, which has wowed everyone that's seen it this year.

VW's Karmann Ghia Type 1 is one of the most curvaceous and attractive designs of all, but this one has a sting in the tail thanks to a built 2,165cc stroker mounted out back.

In spite its humble Beetle-based underpinnings and relative lack of performance Volkswagen's Karmann Ghia has long been considered one of the most beautiful and desirable cars you'll see at any classic car show. Even though it's got a real sixties character it was actually released in 1955, showing how ahead of its time it was, and there can't be many European car fans out there that haven't admired one at some point or another. Of course, the model's close basis on the trusty Beetle has meant that there's a plethora of tuning parts out there, so a great many Karmann Ghias over the years have strayed from the purity and elegance of the original in the search for more performance. You'll see everything from Subaru boxers to V8s stuck in these (there's even a crazy Viper V10-powered one in the States), although the styling on some of these can leave a bit to be desired. However, Matt Donnelly's stunning silver '72 ticks all of the boxes and more.

It takes something to achieve high performance while retaining a car's essential character, and that's what Matt has succeeded in doing here. To do that effectively with one of these Ghias means running with a highly-tuned VW air-cooled engine, which as many will know isn't the most cost-effective way of getting some power in the tail. However it's hard to beat a snorting, fire-breathing long-stroke flat-four for sheer drama and sound, and such a powerplant is the perfect foil to the car's sensual exterior styling. Crash repairer Matt certainly had a long time in which to perfect his plans for his ultimate Karmann Ghia, as he confesses to wanting one for almost twenty years, and his chance at picking up the right car came in summer of 2013 via the previous owner's misfortune. "He'd moved his VW camper van to the other side of the lane, opposite his house" begins Matt. "Unfortunately as he walked away the van started to roll forward, and it collided with the front of the Karmann Ghia." The owner was so disheartened by the event that he decided to put the damaged car up for sale on eBay, which is where Matt first encountered it.

The 1972 car had originally been sold new in San Bruno, California as a dark green 1600, and was imported into the UK in 1996 and restored, receiving a respray in grey and a 2,110cc performance motor along the way. Matt was instantly attracted when he saw it online as he specifically wanted a left-hooker, and even though it was being sold without its Porsche wheels or 2.1 engine he got straight on the phone to the seller to see it he'd pull the auction. Unfortunately the owner wanted to let the auction run its course, and in the closing seconds of the sale Matt was gutted when he lost out by a scant £50. However, lady luck was to point her dainty finger at Matt soon afterwards. "Disappointed, I sent him an email thanking him for his time on the phone" he smiles, "but he contacted me 24 hours later to say that the winning bid was withdrawn, and if I was still was interested I could have it at my last bid, which was less than I would have offered to buy it a week previous." Score! There was still the small matter of getting the damaged car back from the south of England to Matt's home in Northern Ireland - as it wasn't driving, few recovery drivers wanted to take on the hassle of shifting it, and what's more, getting a rough set of wheels to throw under it was nigh on impossible as all of the hubs and brakes were the odd 5x130 Porsche fitment. In the end Matt was able to borrow a set of secondhand Porsche wheels here and sent them over to the seller in advance, before his friends Clarke and Paul drove over in a beavertail lorry six weeks later to finally bring the eBay booty home.

The Rebuild...

The first photo here shows the aftermath of the unfortunate collision that led to the previous owner selling the car. Matt's autobody skills soon had the Ghia's nose as pretty as ever, and so he was able to tear into the custom respray quickly. The mechanical work and engine rebuild followed shortly after, as Matt wanted his new toy on the road for the 2014 show season.










Porsche fitment brakes and replica Fuch wheels add plenty of class under the arches.



The quilted red leather interior is simply stunning. The front Recaro seats have had their headrests deleted for a more classic look.

Matt is delighted with how the Ghia is performing so far, but still has a few adjustments to make to the brakes and suspension.

Irish Classic & Vintage Motorshow 2014

Words & Photos by Andrew Pollock

These days, Ireland plays host to countless large classic events, but they don't come much bigger than the Irish Classic & Vintage Motor Show, held annually at Terenure College in Dublin by the Irish Jaguar & Daimler Club and supported by AXA Insurance. The first Sunday in July each year sees well over 1,000 delectable vintage and classic cars cram onto the well-kept grass of the college, and all in aid of good causes too, and the 2014 running kept up with past events by attracting 1,262 classics and 6,000 punters through the gates. The designated charities this year were the National Maternity Hospital Foundation in Holles St and The Migraine Association of Ireland, two very fine causes, and we're sure the event bolstered their coffers admirably.

Even though there's a large individual car display area laid on, the Terenure event is really all about classic clubs putting their best feet forward – this year there were club exhibits containing everything from classic Porsches to mad motorcycle-engined trials cars, so the term "something for every taste" could have been coined for it. A couple of public debuts for some future classics also took place, namely the Jaguar F-Type and Alfa Romeo 4C sports cars, while heading back to the past there was an amazing assembly of Riley cars put on at the IVVCC stand; 34 in all were brought together, some of which were extremely rare, and Victor Riley was brought over from the UK for the occasion – Victor's father, also Victor, was MD of the Riley car company before it was sold to Lord Nuffield.

With event regular Paddy Cole providing the tunes, as well as a couple of radio stations, and with all sorts of fun and frolics going on at the main stage all day, the atmosphere was buoyant and everyone was having a lovely, relaxed time. The prize-giving at 4pm is a crowd favourite as it brings all of the winners in the various classes around the main stage for a chat with the owner, which always provides an interesting insight into each vehicle. The awards ceremony rounded off another great Sunday at Terenure, and I don't want to say it already, but it won't be long until it's coming around again.

For more information on the Irish Classic & Vintage Motorshow, check out the organising club's website at www.irishjagclub.ie.



This W140 Merc S-Class had some very subtle mods and looked great for it.



The trade area was full once again, with the likes of Pop Parts Plus showing plenty of essential retro wares.



This is the 40th anniversary year of the Fiat 131, and Classic Fiat Ireland put on a fantastic display in its honour.



This specialised trials car features a V-twin engine from a Yamaha Virago 1100.



Two very different cars from very similar eras; Corvette C3 and Escort Mexico.



Alex Burzik's Merc W124 features a home-brewed Kompressor conversion and decals themed around the 'Skipper' character in Pixar's 'Planes' animated film, because Alex's son is a huge fan!

Not one, but two unusual Renault Alpine GTA Turbos, owned by Stephen Boden and Kevin Rooney.

Adrian Nesbitt's Audi Sport Quattro was one of the stars of the Retro Classics stand at this year's Terenure event.

before, but now we really want one.

The unique Riley gathering brought together an unprecedented 34, including some rare and very sporty models.

Cool Ford Model A hot rod on the Irish Kit Car Club stand.

The Irish Jaguar & Daimler stand was showing the new F-Type to the Irish SE[illegible]

Slammed and patina'd early VW Karmann Ghia turned a few heads on its way in.



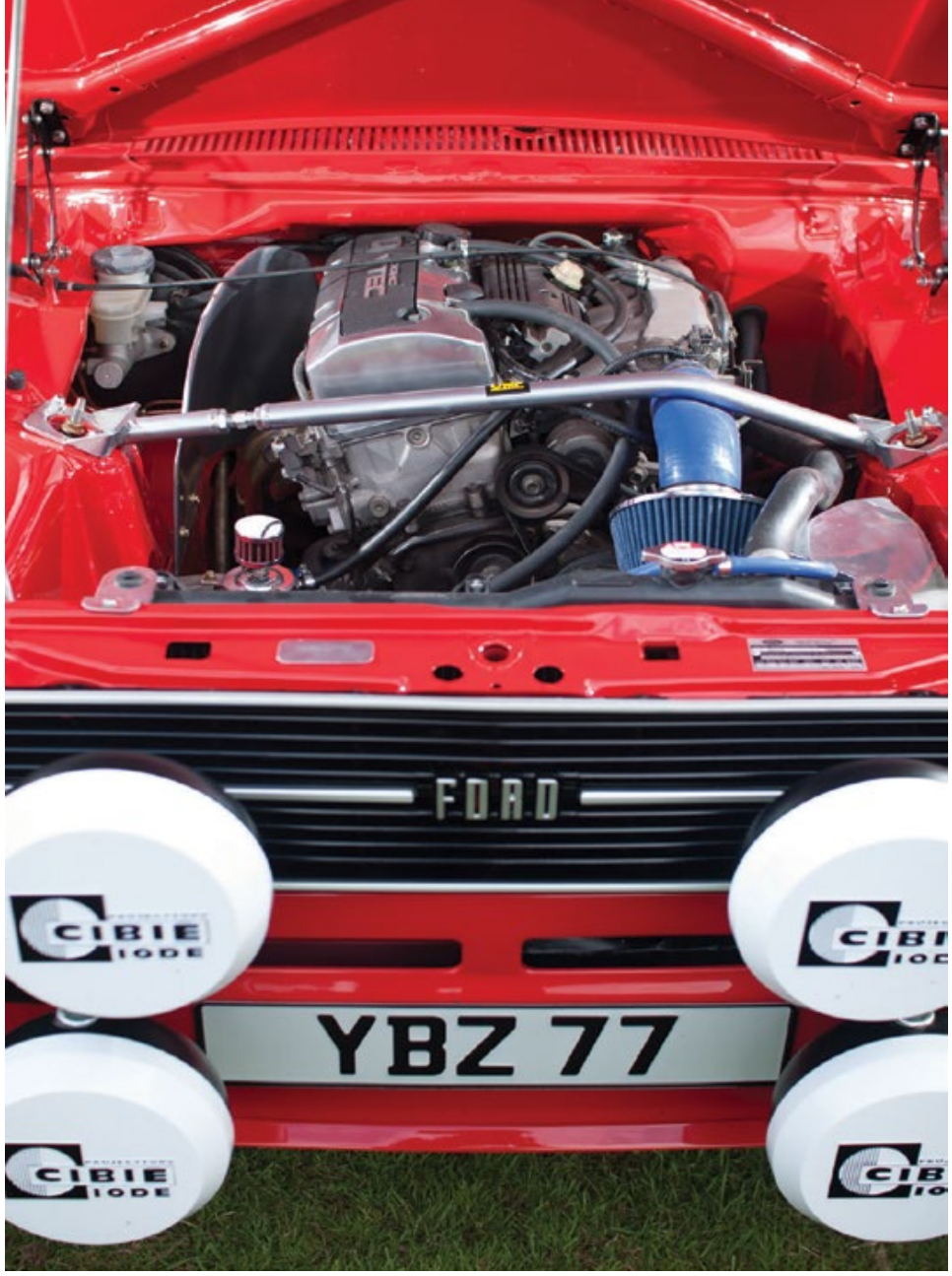
Reuben has achieved a stunning level of fit and finish on this car, and his perfectionism shines though in every part of it.

With its pumped out arches, modern-offset wheels and relocated driving position, any onlooker will realise that there's something special going on under the skin of this classic Ford.

Ask anyone who works in the motor industry who makes the best engines and they'll tell you that their company does. Right, let's start that again. Turn off the tape recorder. Put down the notebook. Reassure them that this is strictly off the record. Now, ask them again who makes the best engines in the world. All will hesitate slightly, and the paranoid ones might even snatch a glance over their shoulder just to make sure their managing director isn't within earshot. And then they'll answer with the truth. Honda. Honda is an engine maker. Note I didn't say car maker, nor even motorbike maker. No, Honda makes engines – from the dinky little one-cylinders powering lawn mowers and strimmers up and down your road, through to the screaming bike engines and up to and including the oh-so-economical 1.6 iDTEC diesel in the current Civic and the astonishing 3.5-litre hybrid V6 engine due for use in the new NSX supercar next year. Honda makes more engines every year than anyone else and practice, as someone once said before it was a cliché, makes perfect.

Even taking all that into account, the F20C engine mounted in the S2000 sports car was always a bit special. Essentially, the S2000 was Honda's little birthday present to itself, marking the company's 50th anniversary in 1999. The F20C was the ultimate cutting edge of modern petrol engine development at the time, producing almost 250hp from a 2.0-litre engine, with not a turbo nor hybrid module in sight and all delivered at a stratospheric, screaming 8,000rpm redline. Its like has rarely been equaled.

Given that the S2000 had a reputation for being staggeringly tail-happy and slidey-slidey, especially in the wet, perhaps it's no surprise that someone, somewhere thought of putting one into that classic tail-out-and-happy-about-it car, the Ford Escort Mk2. In fact, the powerplant has become a regular sight in all manner of classic RWD cars, for either the road or track, but most builders don't go to the same kind of lengths as Reuben Sheridan. A native of Co. Down, Reuben is an engineer by trade, and looking at his stunning Escort on these pages perhaps that's obvious, as not only are the mechanicals of this car amazing, but the fit and finish is perfect too.



The heart of the matter is this F20C Honda engine from an S2000 sports car, which is set right back into the bulkhead for ideal handling. Although in stock specification, the plant has less than 60k on the clock and is good for a high-revving 250bhp, which is plenty in a light Escort.



"The car was locally owned in Northern Ireland" Reuben begins. "It was off the road from the mid-to-late 1980s, and I picked it up in February 2011 having heard about it by word of mouth from a friend." What Reuben bought was essentially just a rolling shell, which had been partially modified for a rally car project; it was wearing modified arches, but the floorpan was in very bad condition and there was some poor welding in evidence too. This wasn't of too much concern to him though, as he's no stranger to Escorts, and anyway, the floorpan was at least one component he wouldn't be needing... "I was looking for some type of build project, and I'd owned Ford Escorts in the 1980s" he confirms. "After I bought it, it sat in the garage until February 2012 when I purchased the donor car, a 2002 Honda S2000 with 56,000 miles on the clock." While most Escort/Honda maters simply grab the engine and 'box out of the S2000 and sell on the rest, for his ambitious project Reuben also required the wiring loom, dash display, rear axle, limited-slip diff, front and rear brakes, floor pan, suspension, wishbones... "Everything, really" he smiles.

Accurate measurement is absolutely critical to a hybrid project like this, and as an engineer Reuben knows that better than anyone. "I cut the floor out of the Escort and then set up the Honda chassis in it and aligned it, clamped it, measured it twice, removed it for trimming, refitted it, clamped it again and measured it" he outlines. "I repeated this five times before I was confident that it was ready to weld." Ensuring that adequate strength was returned to the shell was also paramount, and Reuben added 2mm formed mild-steel gussets on required areas. "Once the chassis legs were lined up with the Ford body I welded in the gaps and then fabricated the inner sills to match them up with the Ford outer sills" he explains. "Then I fabricated the bulkhead and inner arches to match up with the Ford front panel and wings, and did the same with the boot floor and inner rear arches."

THE BUILD...











The wheels are standard S2000 fare, so 6.5x16 up front and 7.5x16 out back. The Honda front brakes are a useful 300mm diameter, which is plenty in such a light car. KBEE coilovers have been fitted to the Honda suspension to allow fine-tuning of the ride height.



You could eat your breakfast off any part of this car; the attention to detail is staggering.



Check out how far Reuben's had to move back his window winder.



You can see here just how far back the engine is set – you could almost stand in front of it to work on it!

Once he'd checked over the entire shell to make sure he hadn't missed anything, Reuben sent it off for sodablasting at NI Shot Blasters in Dungannon, before bringing it back home to prime, stone-chip and seal the underside. He sprayed the underside himself with four coats of Ford Colorado Red to match his plans for the topside. To get the shell ready for its professional topcoats he fitted the suspension and wheels, and fitted the aluminium wheelarches (tarmac rears and forest fronts) with countersunk pop rivets. Incidentally, the front arches were widened by Reuben to cover the wider front track of the Honda suspension, and these flow into a custom front spoiler he also created. With the doors and bonnet fitted, the car was dispatched to TBR in Carryduff for paint, which was completed to a stunning finish.

Boosted by the sight of the painted shell, Reuben really tore into the final refit. The brake and clutch plumbing were the first home, followed by the engine, gearbox and propshaft. "The wiring was a bit of a headache" he laughs. "You think you'll remember where everything goes, but you don't!" All of the car's glass is good second-hand Ford stuff, with the exception of the brand-new heated front screen. With the exterior almost completed, attention was turned to the cabin, which required a lot of custom work as the location of the S2000 running gear means that the driver now sits way back in the car, pretty much like a modern touring-car driver. Reuben's sister, Amanda pulled out all the stops to hand-stitch the leather-effect material around the dash display and centre console; she also covered the sunvisors, and even made a tool bag for the jack and wheelbrace from the same material. A half-cage and swathes of alloy panelling complete the cabin, and one touch we love is the way Reuben modified the window winder on the driver's side to extend back into the door, so he could reach it!

From when he picked up the Escort shell in February 2011 to the car's debut at the Portrush Ford Show in June this year, this unique project took three years of work, with the bulk carried out between January and May 2014 as the finishing point came into sight. "I found the work occasionally challenging but, as an engineer, I knew for the most part what I was doing, and I enjoyed doing it" Reuben smiles. "Once I had it taxed and through the MOT, I took it for its first real drive - that was a great moment, and all the hard work was worthwhile! It has received a lot of attention at the shows, with some head-scratching, and I have had to explain the restoration and how and why I did what I did." As you might imagine, this car shares its temperament with the Honda that it's based on, so it's quiet and civilised at idle and slow speeds but is hugely entertaining when you push on. "It's amazing to drive" Reuben confirms. "It handles well, and is well balanced as I set the engine and driver's position a bit farther back than is usual. The sound is awesome, and the car is fast on the VTEC."







The interior is practically a work of art – just look at that instrument pod, which utilises the S2000's unique digital rev counter. Note that Reuben reused the Escort air vents in the dash as a nod to the car's past.

Putting a fast twin-cam engine into an Escort is nothing new of course. Ford, with a little help from Lotus, and eventually Cosworth, did that in the very first year of the Escort's life, way back in '68, creating a race and rally weapon that has rarely, if ever, been equalled. It just took the guts of fifty years and an engineering genius from Co. Down to put the ultimate twin-cam from the ultimate engine-maker into what must surely now be the ultimate Escort. Surprisingly, Reuben isn't actually a member of any classic car club or society, but having seen the excellence of his Honda-Ford-hybrid, perhaps more than a few car clubs might actually seek him out and encourage him to join...



The F20C's stratospheric rev limit is the stuff of legend in the performance car world.

THANKS...

Reuben would like to thank his sister Amanda, his friends Marty and Gary, TBR in Carryduff for the final paintwork, NI Shot Blasters in Dungannon and Davy Lemon Engineering in Carrowdore.

The alloy rear arches are tarmac items, while the fronts are forest arches that Reuben widened to cover the increased front track.

Cars & Coffee – Limerick

Words & Photos by Tom Heavey

A number of Cars & Coffee events have sprung up around the country, and one of the strongest so far is in Limerick. The idea is simple: meet up in a car park on a Sunday morning, have a cup of coffee, talk cars, and leave whenever you wish. This informal format has become really popular and is set to grow even more as many enthusiasts find it much easier to attend than a show, where you usually have to be in place at a certain time and have to stay there all day. Cars & Coffee events are typically two hours long, so you can be home in time for lunch if you like, or indeed, as many did in Limerick recently, go for a drive to another show.

The Limerick Cars & Coffee is run by the organisers of the Irish Festival of Speed, and they meet on the first Sunday of every month at the East Way Plaza on the Tipperary/Waterford road out of Limerick, which is easy to access from the motorway at Junction 29. I got to the September meeting and thoroughly enjoyed it; the coffee was good but the cars were better, with over 100 cars in attendance ranging from a modern Lamborghini to a Bedford TK truck. It is a truly diverse event where everyone is welcome and there are no formalities; you just relax and talk cars. Jack Kingston, one of the organisers of the event, told me that they are planning many new additions over the coming months and will have some very interesting events coming up, kicking off with the October event on the 5th - this will be called 'Supercar Sunday', and visitors can make a donation to the chosen charity to go for a quick spin in a supercar. There is also a prize for 'Car of the Month', and the winner of this will get a year's subscription to Retro Classics - all you have to do to be in with a chance of winning is to turn up. There are no criteria for the competition, so any car can win.

To find out more about these events, check out the Irish Festival of Speed website at www.irishfestivalofspeed.com. Forums such as Backroads.ie also carry regular updates, as will we here at Retro Classics. There are other Cars & Coffee events taking place in Dublin and Galway, and maybe even more that we're unaware of, so if you are involved in any of these why not contact us at Retro Classics and let us know more?



This Volksrod attracted a lot of attention; it's a case of you either love it or hate it, but rat-look will probably never go out of style.



There were a couple of Trabants present, proving that it's not all fancy cars at this meet.



Porsche lovers were in for a treat as there were up to ten very nice examples at the event.



Two attractive Royal Enfield motorbikes, which aren't actually classics. Just look at the reg; they are new. Chris and Elaine from Retro Ventures now hire these out, as well as an amazing array of vintage and classic cars - check out www.retroventuresireland.com.



Good to see that there are still some tidy Sapphire Cosworths around.



From VW buses to E-Type Jags, anything interesting is welcomed.



One for the editor; this AMG Merc 190 looked well and sounded better.



A Lotus Esprit is guaranteed to attract attention, so a pair is a sure thing.



Two performance icons bridging the seventies and eighties: an X-packed Capri Mk3 rubs shoulders with a pre-facelift Porsche 928.















Erne Trophy Sprint

Words & Photos by William Neill

Above: Irvinestown's Gerry McGarrity brought a beautifully-prepared Mini Cooper to second in C16 despite minor frontal damage on an early run.

It has been twenty years since the last St Angelo Airfield sprint, but as the Enniskillen Motor Club is in its 50th anniversary year the recent rerun of the event on the 5th of July became a fitting celebration of retro motorsport.

The event, which was first introduced in 1968, had many interesting cars running in several classes. Regular sprint winner Seamus Morris was on form on the day to win by 2.3 seconds in his Philbeam, with double success for the Lotus Reynard of David and Andy Hawthorne with second and third places respectively. Event local Trevor Elliott in his self-prepared Ford Escort Mk1 won C16 for Historic cars by 7.5 seconds, while Gerry McGarrity's nimble Mini Cooper was sporting some minor cosmetic damage from an early run, but was placed second in class at the finish, 3.7 seconds ahead of fellow Mini man Mervyn Johnston in his rally version. Robert Coulter was fourth in class, ahead of his dual-driving daughter Olivia, who took the next spot on only her fourth sprint. The Ford Anglia is soon to be handed back to Olivia as she continues in the sprint championship. Another Anglia driven by Enniskillen Motor Club member Gerry Cavanagh was only 0.2 seconds behind Olivia on the first attempt, but the gap increased to 2.2 seconds by the finish. Cavanagh held his position by over 16 seconds from Conn Williamson, who was Sunbeam Tiger mounted. Barry Morris' Darrian T90 was first of the saloon cars in fifth overall, and Conor Lavery's BMW M3 was next, followed by Thomas Purdy in his standout green Ford Escort Mk2.

While competing crews had a midday break, the on-track sights continued with a cavalcade of classic cars, many of which were so well maintained that it was obvious they had never taken to a track before. Plans are in place for this July event to return in 2015, and it is being considered as a counting round of the Northern Ireland championship.

To keep-up-to-date with the Enniskillen Motor Club and their events, visit emcni.weebly.com.



Conor Lavery's BMW M3 is a fan favourite in the sprint and hill scene. At St Angelo Lavery won C11 and finished eighth overall.



Thomas Purdy's modified Mk2 made into the first ten finishers.



Michael McGowan brings his Talbot Sunbeam in to land during his fastest run.



Peugeot 205 driver Neil Dugan drifts across the St Angelo runway to 13th overall.



Barry Morris, who opted for the lightweight Darrian T90 over his usual Mitsubishi Lancer rally car, finished fifth overall.



Robert Coulter dual-drove his Ford Anglia with daughter Olivia, who has started sprint events this season.



During lunch break a convoy of road-going classics took to the track, including this much cared-for Volkswagen Beetle.



John Orr is a regular at the rally events held at St Angelo, and he returned for the sprint in his Ford Escort Mk2.



Robert McFarland leans his Talbot Sunbeam into the second lap of the course.



Event winner Seamus Morris slides his Philbeam around a hairpin on a damp run.



Mini man Gary Milligan lifts the back wheel on his way to winning C16 for Historic cars.



Enniskillen Motor Club member Gerry Cavanagh couldn't resist entering his Ford Anglia.

THE JIGSAW MANTA

Here's a puzzle for you. What looks like a Manta, goes like a Silvia, sounds like a Civic Type R and has a fully removable body shell? The only answer you're likely to find is this unique creation, which was built at home for track-day fun.

Words by Andrew Pollock,
Photos by Sean Hassett

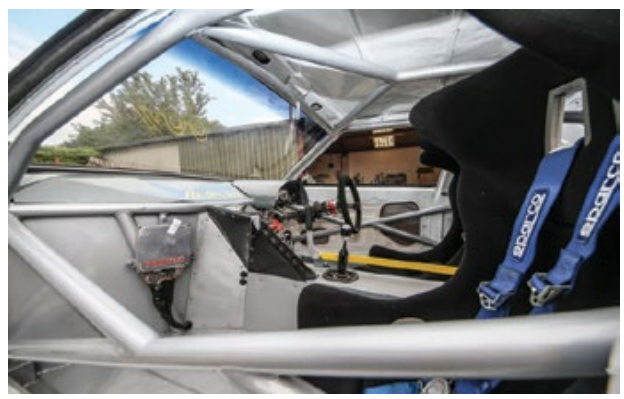
This car does a very good impression indeed of a Manta, but those S14 wheels are the first giveaway that all is not as it was under the skin…

There are some cars out there that defy easy description. The ones that don't have a simple answer to the question "so, what kind of car do you have?" The ones that have parts from a long list of various car manufacturers under the skin. The ones that only their builders could fix when they break. The ones that only their builders fully understand. These cars tend to be some of the most interesting projects we come across, as when they are finished they represent the physical embodiment of their creator's wild imaginations, almost like a real-life version of the doodles we've all drawn on the back of a napkin or beer mat at some point. Eric Hannon's just-finished track car fully fits that category, and you know why? Because when I was writing this article I didn't even know what to call it. It looks like a Manta, but that's only skin-deep in this case; it has mostly Nissan running gear, but not a factory Nissan chassis so we can't call it that; and there's no point in looking to its engine for identity as it's a Type R Honda unit that's been converted for RWD use...

Eric has spent the last four years working on this ambitious project, which isn't surprising when you learn that he's done everything himself. For the last while he's also had a distance barrier to deal with, working in Co. Meath while the car was located back home in Galway, but he managed to keep the flame of passion alight throughout, which is usually where these one-off projects can fail. "I spent six months planning it before fabrication took place" Eric begins, matter-of-factly, but we have to stop him there to first ask the big question; why does this crazy car exist? "I wanted to build a light chassis with a very good centre of gravity to suit track racing. I love retro Opels and was always into Mantas, and I wanted to build it around the look of a Manta 400. I chose S14 200SX running gear as it is fully adjustable and various differential ratios are readily available." When you say it like that it almost makes sense, particularly when you learn that Eric's previous track warrior was a Manta coupe running an XE20 red-top on Jenvey throttle bodies and an Omex 600 ECU. Having obviously reached the limits of the factory Manta structure a fully-bespoke chassis was next on Eric's list, but why use a front-drive Honda engine instead of the already rear-drive S2000 unit that's proven so popular? "The Honda K20 A2 engine was chosen over an S2000 engine as the K20 has more torque down low in the rev range" he explains.

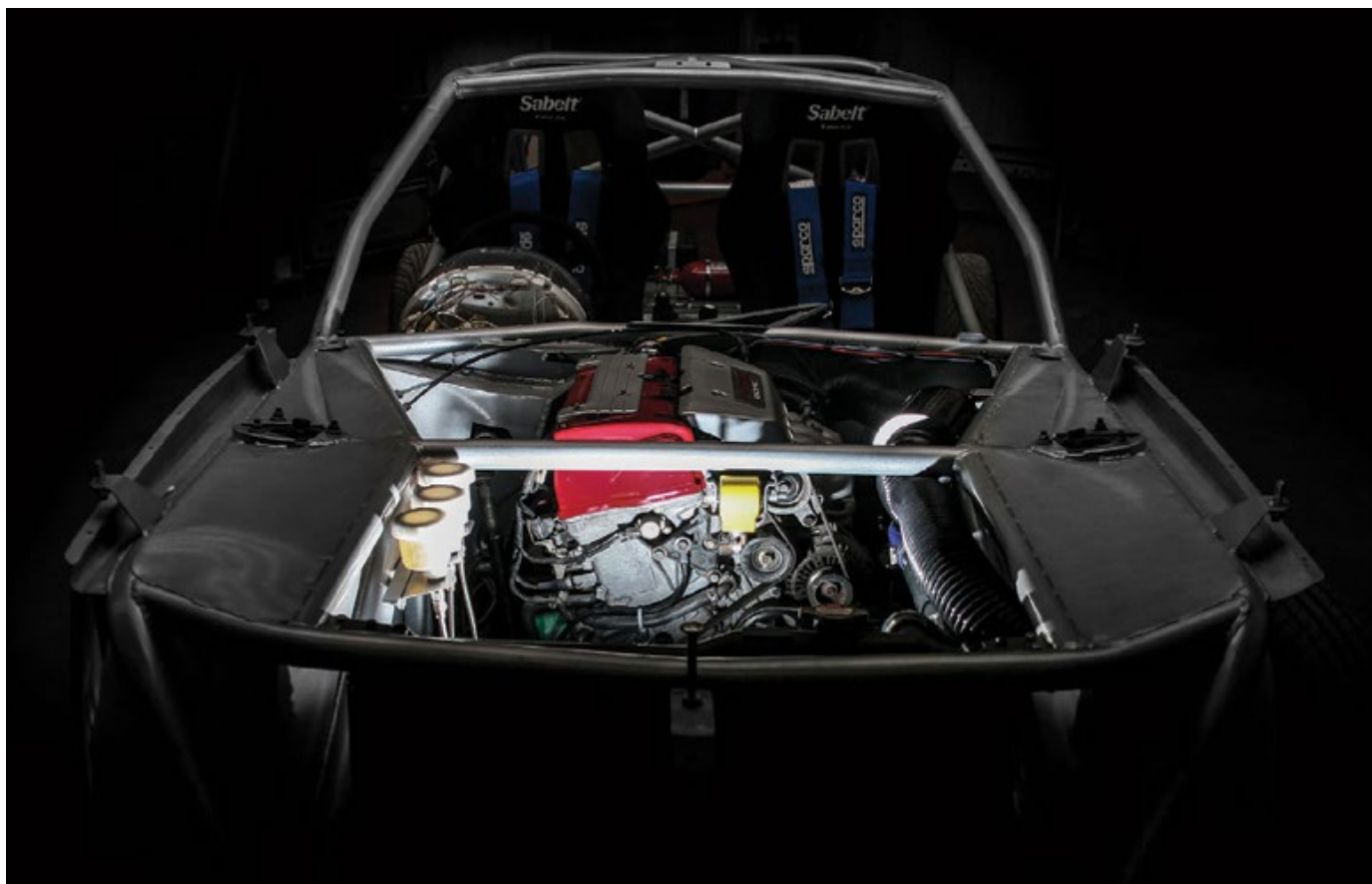






The engine is set very far back indeed, right into the cabin in fact. We'd love to know the front/back balance of the car.





So, there we have the 'why' so now it's time for the 'how'. As you can imagine, constructing your own car from the ground up is no mean feat, particularly in relation to structural strength and suspension geometry. In this case, Eric basically had to build from scratch a tubular CDS steel frame that matched exactly all of the important dimensions of an S14 Silvia, but was 21mm longer to line up with the Manta body shell. "I fabricated a flat level welding table where I could measure X, Y and Z distances for all of the suspension/subframe pickups" Eric outlines. "I used height gauges, inclinometers and laser levels to fabricate the chassis true, and then placed the Manta roof frame and built the rollcage from these dimensions." In fact, that roof panel is the only original Manta part remaining! As mentioned earlier, the main reason Eric opted for Silvia running gear was the wide availability of competition suspension parts, and so once he had the Nissan's front and rear subframes solidly secured in the right places under the car he added adjustable front top mounts, adjustable suspension arms and longer lower control arms. The car is suspended by Tein coilovers, and ubiquitous Corsa C electric power steering has been added to make changes of direction more nimble. Brake-wise you might have assumed that standard Silvia fare might have been fitted, but again Eric keeps the surprises coming as he's fitted front brakes from a Skyline GTR to go with the S14 rears. A Wilwood hydraulic handbrake and floor-mounted pedal box with full front/rear bias adjustment send the fluid where it's supposed to.



The Build. . .

Even though our photos start here with something resembling a car, don't forget that Eric's hard work started way back before this point as there was a lot of planning involved, then laborious cutting and welding together of CDS tubing. The fact that Eric tackled every part of this build including design, welding and painting is hugely impressive.

















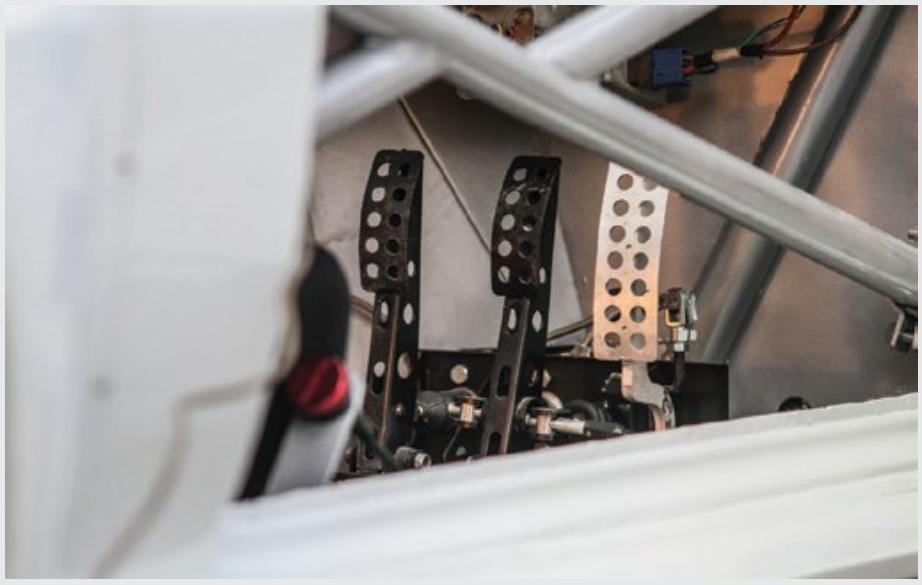




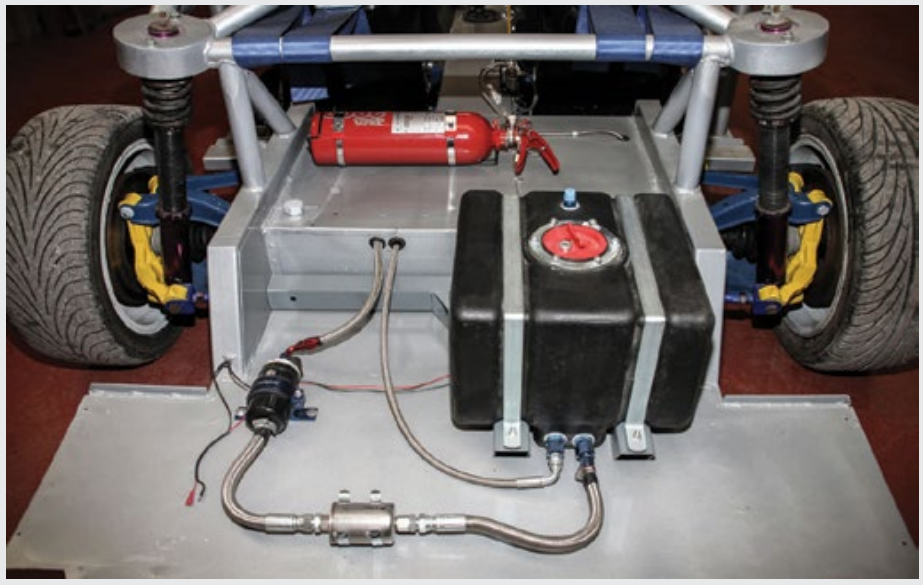


The entire Manta shell is removable for work on the mechanicals.

The interior is completely functional, with electric power steering the only concession of comfort to the driver.



Floor-mounted pedal box provides full adjustability of the car's balance under braking.



The tail of the car laid bare to reveal the racing Jaz fuel tank, Bosch pump and braided hardware. Note the coilover-suspended rear end.

I was going to start this next paragraph with "under the bonnet can be found...", but in truth the engine in this car is set so far back that it's hardly under the bonnet at all. The K-Series Honda is from an EP3 Civic Type R, one of the most famously focused and revvy hot-hatches of all time, so Eric's performance aspirations are off to a good start there. A company in the US called Ballade Motorsport supplied an aluminium conversion plate and thicker aluminium flywheel to allow this FWD engine to be mated to the AP1 six-speed gearbox from an S2000, which obviously also required a custom propshaft. Nestled in the rear subframe, a viscous LSD from a Z32 Nissan 300ZX then takes the drive to the rear wheels. To get around the obvious wiring and immobiliser issues required when using such a modern powerplant, Eric turned to Hondata for one of their K-Pro ECUs, which allows the user to reprogramme many elements from their own laptop – for instance Eric's reduced the rev point for the VTEC engagement, again to provide more power lower in the rev band. Fuel is supplied from a Jaz fuel cell by a Bosch 044 pump via braided lines with AN6/8 fittings, with an S2000 radiator keeping things cool.

If he'd liked, Eric could probably have run the car in its bare frame state, Atom Ariel-style, but he always wanted to evoke the look of the legendary Manta 400 with this build and so the car is clothed in fibreglass panels, all of which are removable for work on the running gear. While the wheels remain Silvia S14 items, they have received subtle custom centre caps bearing the Opel logo, and the rears have had to be spaced out 50mm to properly fill those big Group B rear arches. The interior, too has been properly finished - it's brutally uncompromising, as you sit on the floor in a Sabelt bucket surrounded by switches, tubing and bespoke panelling. The intricate floor-mounted pedal-box and vertical handbrake scream 'race-car', and we're sure the engine will be more than audible as most of it is contained within a bulge coming out of the centre of the dash.

Eric has been on a mission for the last while to get the car finished for the Retro Stock 2014 event in Mondello Park on Saturday the 18th of October, and as our photos were taken the brakes and polycarbonate windows were yet to be properly fitted. A full shakedown test was also hoped to be undertaken before the fruits of Eric's labour headed out on the Mondello track in front of his peers, where we are positive it will receive huge attention. We're looking forward to seeing it there...

The K-Series Honda is a famed power unit, with an amazing 200bhp output as standard from a normally-aspirated 2-litre. It should provide plenty of performance potential in this lightweight machine.

Thanks

Eric would like to mention a number of people for their input during the project, including Brian O'Reilly from Bridge Signs in Ballinrobe for the graphics, Drive Shaft Services in Dublin for fabricating and balancing the propshaft, Steven Barber in Icetronix for electrical help and Sean Hassett for the great photos. He'd also like to especially thank his wife Aoife for her patience, and his family for the hundreds of times they held tape measures, made the tea and lifted and replaced the body!

50mm spacers bring the S14 wheels out under the 400's wide rear arches.

Ted's Opel Vauxhall Run 2014

Words by Dermot Higgins, Photos by Sarah Dornbusch & Brian Duggan








Opel Vauxhall Club Ireland's main event each year is 'Ted's Opel Vauxhall Run', organised by club stalwart Ted O'Connell and his fellow members. The run always attracts a fantastic array of cars of all eras, and this year's on Saturday the 9th of August was no exception. As some of the cars arrived at the base at Hotel Killarney on Friday evening doubts were cast on Saturday's weather, but thankfully the sun was to shine down all the way. The Group Motors Rallying Team from Belfast didn't disappoint again this year, bringing along no less than seven convertibles running a "Topless" theme, one of which was a new Vauxhall Cascada collected from the dealer only a few days before the run. The usual array of Kadetts, Mantas, Chevettes, Cavaliers, Calibras, Vivas, Vectras and Rekords finished off the selection, a fine total of 58 cars in all.

On Saturday morning as Nóirín, Bernie and Margaret were overseeing registration, Donal from event sponsor Cartell.ie was checking out all the Vauxhalls - the Cartell.ie Perpetual Cup for 'Best Vauxhall' was presented by Donal to Katherine Mullane from Donoughmore for her 1977 Cavalier Coupe (below right). Thanks to the Gardaí the group got away from the hotel swiftly to take on this year's route, incorporating parts of The Wild Atlantic Way, theDingle Peninsula, Slea Head and the Conor Pass, and also covered some terrain used as rallystages in the past. Lunch stop was the renowned Páidí O'Sé's Bar in Ventry, and after lunch the perpetual cup awards were presented, as well as plenty of spot prizes - Laszlo Kovacs from Opel Ireland was at hand to help with all the presentations. The Kevin O'Leary Opel Perpetual Cup for 'Best Opel' was won by Tony Barnicle for his 1985 Manta B, while the Perpetual Shield was won by Liam Healy for his 1980 Chevette. This year's additionalperpetual trophy kindly sponsored by Opel Ireland for 'Best Vehicle of the Run' was won by Paul Horan for his 1975 Chevette. The "Spirit of the Run "Perpetual Award was presented to Brendan (Benny) O'Shea for his commitment to providing a breakdown service/backup every year since the run started, and the Jackie Small Memorial Award presented by Group Motors Rallying went to John Kelly for his very original 1979 Kadett C Coupe. Four special awards went to Bernard O'Connor's 1974 Manta A GTE, Brendan Howard's 1979 Rekord E, Darragh Pender's 1987 Manta B and Denis Murphy's 1979 Kadett C City. The cars returned to Hotel Killarney on the Saturday evening, and the night concluded with a relaxed get-together in the bar, complete with a few songs.

The run's organising committee would like to thank all of the sponsors, especially main sponsors Cartell.ie and the Kevin O'Leary Group (Opel Dealers), Opel Vauxhall Club Ireland, the Gardaí Síochána, the media and Opel Ireland, with a special word of thanks going to all the marshals on the day. This year the committee decided to sponsor a puppy at the Irish Dogs for the Disabled – a great cause as it costs €15,000 to get a puppy fully trained up and placed with someone in need. Next year Ted's Opel Vauxhall Run will be back in Cork, and will take place on the 8th of August 2015.









Toyotafest at the Frosses Festival 2014

Words & Photos by Gary & Daniel Kelly























ToyotaFest 2014 was held on Saturday the 31st of May last in Frosses Village in Co. Donegal, and true to its name it was attended by no less than 273 classic Toyota cars and vans. Many models from the seventies and eighties were on show, including KE20, KE30 and KE70 Corollas, Starlet KP60s, TA14, TA40 and TA60 Carinas, TA22, TA23 and TA40 Supras and even rarities like Cressidas and Crowns – the earliest vehicle in attendance was a 1971 Celica TA22. Vans were well represented by the Lite Ace, Hi Ace and commercial versions of the Starlet and DX Corolla. In fact, one of the stars of the show proved to be a 1977 Hi Ace RH20 Camper van with only 23,000 miles on the clock from new - it is in its original condition, and is owned by Mr John Fardell from England. Our friends in the Twin Cams also came out in force, with over fifty attending.

Cars started to arrive at 10.30am, and by 2pm the village's community field was almost full to capacity. At 3.30pm everyone headed off on a 20km road run through the Blue Stack Mountains, finishing this great gathering with tea/coffee and light refreshments at the local Toyota Dealership in Donegal, Kelly's Sales & Services. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Kelly Family for their tremendous hospitality; this is actually where our interest in Toyotas started, as Joseph Kelly started selling the marque back in 1974, making Kelly's Sales & Services one of the longest-serving dealerships in Ireland today.

We have received very positive feedback regarding ToyotaFest 2014, and we would like to thank everyone involved most sincerely for their help and support in the lead-up and during the event. There are DVDs of the event available at €10 each, and these can be purchased by contacting us at frossesfestival2014@gmail, on Facebook at ToyotaFest 2014 or by calling 087 7709995 or 083 3047809. Proceeds from both the Frosses Festival 2014 and the DVDs go in aid of the Donegal Hospice and local charities.



Not Stirred

Words & Photos by Andrew Pollock

When Porsche rolled out their new 911 in 1963 as the replacement for the much-loved 356, they must have known they were onto a good thing. The rear-mounted air-cooled flat-six powertrain was unorthodox to say the least, so they had put in serious research and development into making it work. The increased power over the 356's flat-four was very welcome, as was the independent rear suspension to replace the older car's antiquated swing axles. It was a more substantial car with more interior space, yet was still small enough to be a nimble, proper
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Paul's been racing historics since the nineties, but his first love for Lotus Cortinas has now been firmly replaced by Porsches.

Martini and Porsche are a classic combination, and this newly-revamped matt-black wrapped 911 2.7 is looking sharp for its next season of racing.

Nowhere is the mettle of a so-called "sports car" tested more than in the heat of motorsport, and the 911 has a peerless reputation in this regard. It has excelled in fields as diverse as desert rallying and endurance racing, and has exhibited strength and stamina as well as outright speed. Both qualities are well recognised by Paul Gray, who has been racing the matt black '72 on these pages in the Irish Historic Racing Car Association (HRCA) Championship and Irish Porsche Open Series since 2006. Paul, who's settled in Dublin but has lived in the UK and Spain in the past, lives and breathes classic racing cars, and there haven't been many times in previous decades when he hasn't had one knocking around. "I've always been drawn to classic cars, but especially historic race cars" he explains. "I raced in the nineties in the UK with Lotus Cortinas, which were always my passion, but gave it up when I moved to Spain. Within six months of returning to Dublin I had located a Lotus Cortina Mk1 race car and campaigned from then on." He's been on the pace too, having won at the Phoenix Park Races in 2003 in a dual-drive with Rosemary Smith, and was runner-up in the HRCA championship in 2004. "I eventually won the championship in that car in 2005 - I regret selling it in 2008" he smiles ruefully.

We all know that you can't keep them all, and the Cortina's sale in 2008 was due squarely to the 911 you see here. It had been put up for sale in late 2005 after a very successful stint for a few years with Richard O'Mahony at the wheel, taking many class wins in both the HRCA and Irish Porsche Open series, and actually won the 2004 HRCA title outright. "During 2005 I had been offered drives in the Irish Porsche Open, and decided that I wanted to drive something different the next year" Paul recalls. "After getting various free drives in 911s I suppose I had been smitten, and was on the lookout for a nice race 911." Originally believed to have been raced in the UK by Mark Haynes of Haynes Publishing, this car was ready to roll with a proven track record, and so Paul took the plunge into the unknown, away from his Cortina comfort zone.

So, what exactly is the car? It started out in life back in 1972 as a two-litre 911T, one of the now-so-desirable pre-1973 facelift models, but between then and now has been converted very specifically for track use. The bodyshell has been lightened extensively to the tune that it now weighs only 850kgs, which was accomplished through the use of fibreglass panels and Perspex windows (except for the windscreen). A full FIA-recognised roll cage both protects the driver and adds plenty of stiffness to the shell. Racing-spec Bilstein suspension holds each corner off the ground, and all bushings have been replaced with stiff polyurethane items. In contrast to the relatively slim wheels and tyres this car would have worn when a new 911T, it now boasts fat eight-inch Fuchs at the front and nine-inchers at the rear, which have recently been beautifully restored by Jeff at Tallaght Powdercoating (see their advert in this issue). These wider rims are entirely necessary, as the old two-litre engine is long gone – the tail end is now home to a 2.7-litre from a later 911, which barks through a pair of triple-choke Weber IDA carbs to pump out 280bhp and 250lb/ft of torque. It's an impressive output when you work out that this lightweight car's power-to-weight ratio is now almost 330bhp per tonne, when most people's benchmark for a decently fast car is 100bhp per tonne! A racing 915 gearbox backs up the unit, and has been modified for shorter shifting, and the brakes are from a later 911 Turbo with Pagid Blue racing pads all round.



Triple-choke Webers are a 911 peculiarity, and sound amazing.



Rear wheels are fat 9x15-inchers, recently restored by Tallaght Powder Coating



The front bumper is an RS replica item, which has a more aggressive chin spoiler.



The gear shifter is a trick-looking quick-change unit.



Paul is well held into the Sabelt seat by Schroth harnesses.



In place of the two-litre motor that would have been in the base car, this racer now sports a 280bhp 2.7-litre powerhouse.



Like most race cars, the cockpit isn't built for looks, but business. Note the modified clutch pedal for easier heel-and-toe action.



Regular Mondello-goers might remember this car in its previous black/red Carrera livery, where it could be usually found having a massive top-three tussle.



Paul takes his safety seriously – as well as the usual FIA cage and plumbed-in extinguisher system, he also always wears a HANS device.

It's not much use having a serious racing car if the soft bit in the driver's seat isn't up to much, but that's certainly not the case here. Paul has really taken this car by the scruff of the neck and made it dance, taking the 2006 and 2007 Irish Porsche Open championships and winning its class around such legendary circuits as Oulton Park and the scary fast Silverstone. "I love this car" beams Paul; "it's the most successful racing car I have ever campaigned, with 52 class wins or podiums out of 56 races. It is super reliable, and bullet proof." Every winning race-car is a team effort, and he is full of praise for the backing he received from Barry Whelan at Whelan Motorsport in 2006 and 2007, which contributed greatly to his wins in the Porsche Open in those years; "Barry and David did everything to make sure the car was flying in every race" he confirms, and he'd also like to give credit to Damien McCauley for electrical work and Paul Hickey and Peter Gerrity for the engine build.

The car has recently had some work and a cosmetic makeover, and will be ready to roll for the 2015 season. While it was previously black with red bumpers, it's now been redone in a very attractive matt black wrap with gloss Martini graphics, which was carried out by Jonathan White at Insignia Signs & Display in Harold's Cross in Dublin (www.WRAP.ie). This has really given this Porsche a new character, and we'd hate to see it bearing down on us in the rear view mirrors on track! Paul is looking forward to campaigning it in anger in 2015, and only has good things to say about the HRCA and everyone involved in historic circuit racing here in Ireland. Having enjoyed watching Paul's on-track tussles for many years in the car's old guise, I look forward to more of the same in the future.



The rear end features a 2.7 RS-style ducktail engine cover, custom exhaust and plenty of "speed holes".

THANKS...

Paul would like to thank Susie, Laura, Saoirse and Michael for listening to him only talking about racing and racing cars over the years, plus the HRCA racers, John Morris, Matt, Ian, Jenny, the safety marshals and all the team at Mondello Park, and Richie Redmond, Stephen Boden, Eamonn Harte andDes Quinn, who founded Numpty Racing over a decade ago and are all still close friends.

HRCA RACING

If you'd like to know more about the Historic Racing Car Association, check out www.HRCA.ie or email Paul directly on paulgray48@gmail.com. No matter what car you have there's always someone to race against, and we're told it's not as expensive as you might imagine.

SUPRA HERO

Words & Photos by Andrew Pollock

It takes one thing to engineer a hugely powerful engine transplant, but to simultaneously bring back an almost terminally rotten car from the brink takes a special kind of determination. Enter Pat Kelly and his Celica turbo.



A tool maker in a machine shop by trade, Pat knows his way around CNC machines and workshop gear and loves an engineering challenge. This car certainly gave him that!

With its loony powerful engine and dark, moody exterior, we reckon this is a real "baddie's car". A Japanese version of Stuntman Mike's Chevy Nova in 'Deathproof'?

While Pat built this hot-rod Toyota very much to his own style and taste, he also built it to perform. I was lucky enough to jump in for a spin near his home on the day of our shoot, and the overriding feeling you get is that this is a proper "muscle car". The pillarless windows and curvaceous coupe styling shout seventies chic, and the hidden side-exit exhaust barks, whistles and whooshes a fierce tune. It's properly, properly fast too, and it hurtles to 120kmh and beyond literally without even trying. "It's a bit loose in the wet" Pat advises, "so it demands respect - it will bite. There is no need to bring it past 3,000 rpm really, and it pulls like a train in 5th." I can vouch for the "loose" bit, as coming out of junctions on this damp evening saw Pat absolutely nuking the rear tyres through the first three gears, and even at cruising speed you couldn't really justify hammering the throttle too much, as things could get rather squirmy, shall we say. It's obvious to us that Pat gets a huge kick out of this car as-is, but as I mentioned at the start, he can't leave anything alone and has some very interesting plans in store for it over the winter months involving an even more ambitious engine transplant. If you live in the Limerick area, watch your rear-view mirrors next spring...



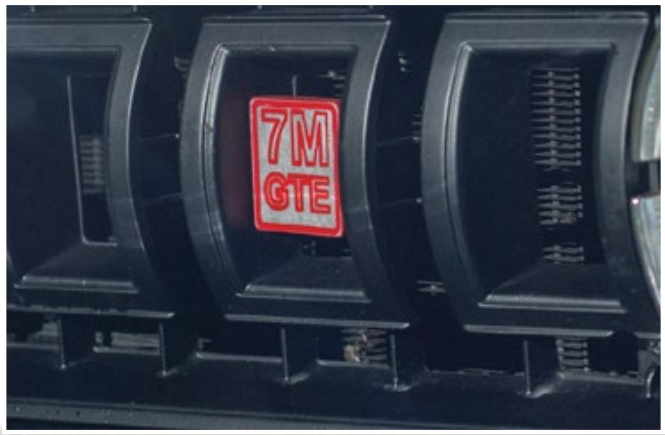
The interior might look original at first glance, but there's been a whole lot of work put into integrating the instruments from the Supra with the Celica's. Note the custom centre cap that Pat knocked up on the old CNC – nice when you know how!



Pat is constantly trying to improve the car still further, and before I arrived for the shoot he'd been working out how to prevent the engine torque from tearing the rubber bushings out of his rear trailing arms...



Modified Mazda steels are super-low-key, and sit well with the sombre grey paintwork.

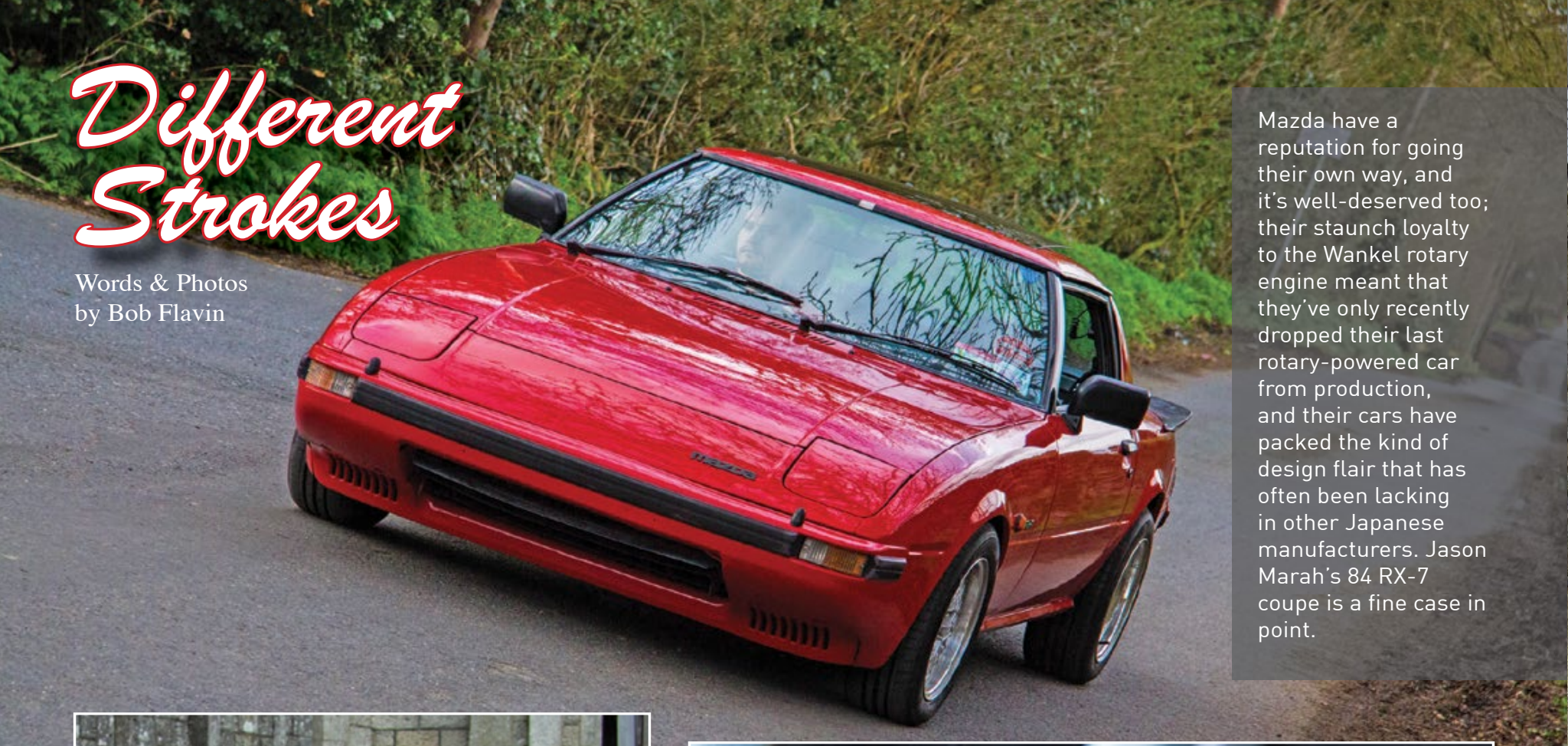




These RA23 Celicas take the whole 'Coke-bottle' styling thing and pump it up to eleven. Just look at those curves.

Different Strokes

Words & Photos
by Bob Flavin



Mazda have a reputation for going their own way, and it's well-deserved too; their staunch loyalty to the Wankel rotary engine meant that they've only recently dropped their last rotary-powered car from production, and their cars have packed the kind of design flair that has often been lacking in other Japanese manufacturers. Jason Marah's 84 RX-7 coupe is a fine case in point.



Jason had a lot of work to put in before he could get his RX-7 on the road, but it's been worth every minute.



The dashboard has plenty of info on offer, including oil pressure and a voltmeter.

Mazda have never done things like other car companies. Starting out in life as Toyo Cork Kogyo Co. in 1920, they soon renamed themselves as Toyo Kogyo Co. so that they could start making machine tools and a tiny truck for export to China: the Mazdago was a refinement of the three-wheeler, looking a lot like a motorbike but with a roof and a flat bed over the back wheels. Something Mazda tend to gloss over is the fact that they made rifles and weapons throughout the Second World War, as in fact did most car companies in Europe. Then came the big one; the atomic bomb was dropped. Mazda were based in Hiroshima, and while the factory didn't take a direct hit Mazda gave over a portion of the HQ to house government buildings and to support the wounded of the area. As you can imagine, it took a long while to get back up and running after such a catastrophic blow to the region; I'm not sure if any other country would have recovered as quickly, but four years after the end of the war Mazda started to export their three-wheeled truck again, this time to India. In 1958 Mazda introduced the amusingly-titled Romper truck, and followed it up with the little R360 Coupe, which was hugely economical thanks to its 356cc air-cooled engine. At just 300,000 yen, the R360 brought the dream of owning a car within the reach of salaried workers, and in December 1960 alone, 4,090 units were bought by eager customers.

The world of Mazda was about to change forever, as in 1961 they entered into an agreement with NSU to invest in the development of the Wankel engine. Thus, in 1967 their first Wankel-engined car arrived: the Mazda Cosmo. The sporty car boasted a twin-rotor engine that, despite only displacing 491cc (x2), generated 110bhp. Mazda quickly found new markets opening up, as the rotary engine was lighter, smoother and had more horsepower than similarly-sized market rivals, and the attractive rotary-powered RX-2, RX-3 and RX-4 really put Mazda on the map. However, the one thing the Wankels were not was fuel efficient, and the oil crisis of the seventies meant that the rotary took a heavy blow. Honda swept in with their efficient and user-friendly Civic in '73, and they cleaned up. Mazda weren't particularly efficient in making the cars either, and in '75 they were saved from bankruptcy by investors. They kept the conventional piston engines going, and sales began to recover. It was just as well, because in 1978 they stuck their rotary engine into the new RX-7 sports car, and Mazda was saved.

The original RX-7 was developed under the simple theme of "the pursuit of driving pleasure." Its 130bhp 12A twin-rotor engine was mounted in the front, but due to its very compact size it was set very far back in the engine bay to endow the car with outstanding handling stability. The RX-7 was the only Japanese car at the time to feature pop-up headlights, and it also packed a sporty and ergonomic interior with a T-shaped instrument panel and bucket seats. Measuring 4,285mm in length it was supposed to have room for four occupants, but I think the people in the back would have needed removable legs to fit in. It was sports car after all though, and the five-speed manual model had a top speed of 180km/h and could sprint the quarter mile in 15.8 seconds. And, the RX-7's revvy nature and amazing handling has cemented its place in the hearts of sports car fans all over the world.



It's a real pity that popup lamps have become extinct, as they were always the mark of an interesting car. Jason's deliberately gone for mismatched front and rear wheels in a nod to Japanese drift culture.



A real driver's car, the RX-7 is well able to pick up its skirts and fly if needed.

Mazda worked hard over the years to further improve the RX-7, and in 1984 the Series 3 version you see here was bought in Northern Ireland. It's obviously changed hands a few times since then, and as with all fast Mazda's it worked pretty hard during its life. In 2012 Jason Marah took ownership of the RX7 from a man in Galway. Jason tells me that there was a lot of rot and rust underneath, along with some suspension problems, so it was taken off the road straight away for remedial work. Between the repairs to the bodywork and running gear, plus the subsequent respray, the work took about a year and lots of money, so it wasn't until 2013 that Jason finally got his classic Jap back on the road. I actually met Jason at a Rotary Club meet last year, when he had only been driving the car for the weekend, and I could already tell that he was excited by the experience. He knows that there's still more work to be done here; some of the interior trim is showing its age, for example, but it's still very comfortable and everything works, which is testament to Mazda's build quality. Mechanically the car is very fit though, and provides the kind of exciting driving experience that made the RX-7 famous. The smooth but high-revving rotary engine emits its own very distinctive note, which is completely addictive to rotary fans, and sitting well back in the cabin and peering over the unusual dash to the top of the pop-up lamps you really do feel like you're driving something special. Jason has a fine example of the car that is only set to improve further, and he's treating it right, so as it moves into retirement it's nice to know we'll see the RX-7 live on and continue to put smiles on the faces of car fans everywhere for the decades to come.

The Neal Egan Memorial Ford Show & Run

Words & Photos by Patrick Mullan

Probably the most anticipated classic Ford event in the country, the Neal Egan Memorial Show & Run was back this year on Sunday the 3rd of August at its now home at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Sligo. To up the ante the Neal Egan Club only went away and brought Colin McRea's 1996 MonteCarlo WRC Ford Focus in as the main spotlight of the show, thanks to Seamus Herron, and if you thought I was going to just come on the day and take one or two snaps of that, I'm sorry to say you would be sadly disturbed! What's good for the goose is good for the gander, so I hit the tar running with a special one-off car shoot the night before the show, taking in the WRC Focus and some other machinery that God himself would have been proud of. Apart from the main attraction I couldn't turn away J Jordan's original RS200, Paul Smith's massively upgraded Focus ST, Gary Folan's Bravo 2 Fiesta, Micheal Keavney's 1600 Sport, Brendan and Noreen Sheehan's red RS2000 and Pauric Farrell's white RS2000. Several missed calls from the wife later and I was still clicking away until late that night, but I did make the deadline for the club's Facebook page for 12am despite an altercation with a dodgy keyboard button. Home to bed and up early the next morning was not an option as yours truly worked on editing some of the images from the night before, but I couldn't help myself as I had captured some paradise on my laptop.

Arriving at the gate of the Radisson Blu the next morning I could see we were in for a big turnout, as per usual. A wry smile at the entrance told me to nicely feck off up the back with the Passat, which I gladly did. Now down to business; wait, I smell a burger from the hotel's outside burger stand! Nah, we better do some work. The skies had opened for the day, but it did not make any difference to the event, with the car park filled with awesome machinery. I deliberately stayed away from the model section as that's a no-no between me, the wife and her mantelpiece. There was a great selection to choose from though. I might add that the traders reported a good day, and it's not surprising since this show has rightfully earned great name for itself. The prize for 'Car of the Show' went to Eugene Feely for his stunning Ford Cortina 1600E, which featured in the January 2014 issue of Irish Vintage Scene Magazine, before it was time to hit the road to tour the best scenery that Sligo and Leitrim had to offer, particularly The Horseshoe in Gleniff. After a short fuel stop in Manorhamilton it was off to Lough Gill for a group shot before returning to the hotel, where club-member Liam Somers became host for the evening, plucking out raffle tickets to howls of laughter. This is the spirit of this event, and that's one of the many reasons I love to attend. It's time for me to stop writing, but the show must go on so here is one glass raised to next year's show. Even if it's only full of orange, the sentiment is good. Until again...

For further information on the Neal Egan Memorial Club and their events, see their Facebook page under 'Neal-Egan-Memorial-Club-FORD'.



The low cloud in The Horseshoe in Gleniff didn't dampen anyone's day.



Gary Folan's 'Bravo 2' Fiesta is a favourite of our editor's, with its many unique touches under the skin.



Sharing the top billing with the McRae Focus were J Jordan's real-deal RS200 and a gorgeous BDA Mk1 rally car.

Award Winners

Best 1960s: *Terry Howard, Mk1 Escort Van*
Best 1970s: *Joe McLoughlin, Mk2 Cortina*
Best 1980s: *Sean McWilliams, Fiesta XR2*
Best 1990s: *James Halpin, Escort RS Turbo*
Best 2000s: *Eoin Kelly, Focus ST*
Best of Show: *Eugene Feely, Cortina 1600E*



A seventies Mk3 Cortina cruises the venue, looking for a parking spot amongst its classic brethren.



Michael Keaveney's 1600 Sport just made it out of restoration in time for the show, and it's a real credit.



The run around picturesque Sligo and Leitrim is an integral part of this event, and makes for some great photo opportunities, like here at "Gronholm's Corner".

It was obvious that the car had been lying up for many years, and the story goes that the previous lady owner near Portlaoise had sent it to a scrapyard after it had been sitting around the house for a long time – it had been subsequently spotted and rescued from that scrapyard, but had laid around again in that man's yard until Martin brought it home for some much-needed TLC. It was very much a project, as you can see by the first couple of restoration photos accompanying this feature, with missing windows, broken lamps and an interior full of lush, green plant life, but as Martin got on with the stripdown he was amazed to find almost no rust in the shell. "That car was very good" he nods; "it needed no welding, and all that was really wrong with it was the paintwork." In all my years of writing for classic magazines it's almost unheard of to learn that a thirty-year-old car that had been lying in such condition needed zero welding, and it's due testament to the famously solid build quality of these early Jettas that it's survived so well.

With no need for expensive panel replacement, Martin was able to strip down the car to a shell pretty quickly, and after a few light repairs were made it was sent out to Ivan Armstrong in Turloughmore for a respray inside and out in the original Mars Red. Martin got it back home in early 2012, and straight away put it up on stands and got underneath to fully rustproof the floors and chassis members for the next thirty years or more. With that messy job out of the way, Martin was left with a nice clean starting point on which to start building up his dream classic Jetta, but he soon encountered a stumbling block. "A lot of stuff is obsolete for these, and can't be bought new anymore" he explains. "I spent a lot of time watching out on eBay, and I got most of the parts from England and the US." Some of these hard-to-find components were major items such as the taillights and front and rear windscreens, but plenty of legwork (or should that be keyboard finger-work) eventually saw the pile of new parts increasing nicely. A rare VW/Hella accessory front grille was picked off a scrap car down the country and was cleaned up and fitted with brand new spotlamps, and a set of good secondhand plastic wheelarch trims were also fitted to add some further flair to the exterior.









The dash has been upgraded slightly by a Scirocco-type steering wheel and some extra gauges, while the driver now sits on leather-trimmed Mk2 Golf GTi seats.

The Rebuild. . .

Looking at the first couple of photos here, it's hard to believe that the shell of this car was completely sound. Tackling that rotten interior must have been unpleasant, but it makes the finished article all the more worthwhile!













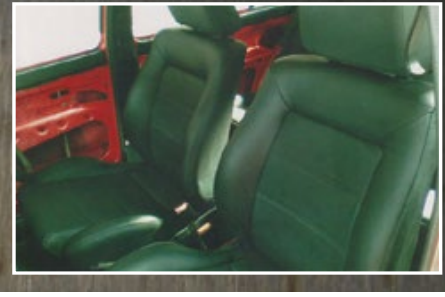














Vento 1.9D transplant is a very subtle but worthwhile upgrade.

Mechanically speaking, while the 1.6 diesel fitted to these Mk1s is famously reliable and economical, fast it most certainly is not. Having sampled his brother John's 1.6D Golf Martin was keen to put a little spring in his Jetta's step, and so the original 1.6D/four-speed setup was ousted in favour of a 1.9D from a '97 Vento, which was mated to a five-speed diesel gearbox from a Mk2 Golf. Martin tells us that this was a very straightforward swap, needing only a different gearbox mount and some gear linkage parts from other Golf and Jetta models, for which Michael Higgins at Air-Cooled Technology in Oranmore proved very helpful. And, even though the 1.9 Vento was no ball of fire either, it does give an extra 15bhp or so, which is very noticeable in a light car like the Mk1. After lying for so long, all of the suspension and braking components were also gone through carefully, with the likes of new wheel bearings, fuel lines and suspension bushes being fitted, so mechanically this old girl is now as fit as a fiddle once again, and there's no missing the fifteen-inch ATS Cup wheels that Martin's added at each corner.

Although he's kept his Jetta mostly original, one area in which Martin pushed the boat out a bit is in the cabin, which is now a lot more plush than the C spec would have been. Gone are the torn old poverty-spec cloth seats (which featured non-adjusting backrests), with the front runners now playing host to a pair of pews from a Mk2 Golf GTi – these have been retrimmed in leather by Declan Ferns in Ballybrit, with the rear bench done to match. Four excellent door trims were salvaged from a Mk1 Golf four-door in the UK via eBay, a lucky find Martin tells us, and the driver is now faced by a Wolfsburg-crested sports steering wheel of the type fitted to Mk1 Sciroccos. Some sporty gauges and a renewed headliner complete the simple but very effective interior, which retains its retro character nicely while also being much more comfy than before.

Since its completion in 2013 Martin hasn't been shy about getting out and about in his fresh classic, and he's picked up several awards for his efforts including the prize for 'Best Mk1 Jetta' at the Limerick VW Show in 2013, sponsored by VW Ireland. For a car that was ten-a-penny on our roads in the eighties, the Mk1 Jetta is a really rare sight today, so it's fantastic that there are committed enthusiasts like Martin out there to save and preserve them for the future generations to enjoy.



This car's stunning condition has been recognised at a number of events already.



Chunky ATS Cup alloys tie in well with the Mars Red paint and black body trim.



Hard-to-find door trims were rescued from a four-door Mk1 Golf during one of Martin's many eBay hunts.

Thanks. . .

Martin would like to thank his brother John for storage space and help during the project, Michael Higgins at Air-Cooled Technology in Oranmore, Galway for parts, Declan Ferns in Ballybrit, Galway for the interior trim work, Ivan Armstrong in Turloughmore, Co. Galway for the paintwork, and most of all his wife Agnes for her support and for coming along to the car shows with him. Retro Classics would like to thank the staff and management of St Jarlath's College in Tuam for the use of their grounds for our photos.



The genuine accessory Hella front grille was rescued from a scrap car complete with a pair of busted lamps, but once restored it adds a sporting theme to the otherwise quite plain front end.



MNI is a Co. Wicklow registration, but the car had made its way to Laois with 114,000 miles on the clock by the time Martin caught up with it.

MEC Hillclimb & Sprint Weekend

Words & Photos by Con Brady

The Motor Enthusiasts Club motor club hosted the ninth and tenth rounds of this year's Naylor Engineering Hillclimb & Sprint Championship at Naul, Co. Dublin on the 16th and 17th of August last. The racing event utilised the same course over both days, which incorporated fast sweeping bends and curves to provide a challenging prospect for all competitors. There was a strong entry, with some 65 competitors for both days' sprints, and a large variety of cars were in attendance from pre-1955 vintage racers to single-seaters and modified saloons.

Simon McKinley driving the Lant RT4 notched up two more victories on his home event, while Rory Stephens driving the Radical SR8 took second place on both days, with Robert Bell in the Crosslé Busa taking third on Saturday and Gary Graham in the Formula Ireland taking third spot on Sunday. Some of the pre-1955 HRCA race cars taking part included Mark Brennan's Alvis 12/50, Detlef Heyer's immaculate 1938 BMW 328, Edmund Cassidy's Iona Special and Ken McAvoy's 1934 Austin 7. Paul McNaughton was also out in the Riley 9 Special, plus David Miller in the Jaguar XK140. These fabulous old cars were built for racing, and so it's great to see them in action. The Modified Saloon class was well represented, with Eanna Carroll's Honda Civic, Bob Dwane's Falcon Mini, Gary Cunningham's Fiat Punto, Mick O'Shea's MGB GT and Mick Walsh's Ford Sierra Cosworth. The MEC also organised a special class for Fiat Cinquecento 1100cc cars, which are becoming increasingly popular in hillclimb and sprints events; nine drivers took part in this class over the weekend, and the top spot in the class on both days went to Gary Egan.

For information on the Motor Enthusiasts Club and their events, log onto www.mec.ie.



Bob Dwane's radical-looking Falcon Mini blasts up the hill at the MEC sprint.



The Austin 7 Special of Ken McAvoy rounds a tight bend at speed.



Martin Flanagan's BMW E30 flashes past.



Simon McKinley's dominant Lant RT4 notched up another two victories.



Seamus Anderson's Anglia gets wild on the exit of a gravely corner.



The Sapphire Cosworth of Mick Walsh whooshes up the hill.



It's a long time since we've seen a Mk1 Ritmo; this is Aidean Byrne's.



The Lotus Elan +2S of Sean Murray in action.



Brendan Keane tackles the hill in his Westfield.



The impressive-looking Mk2 Escort of Peter Bogan.









Shane Carberry's Escort is a RWD G3 version.

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Acute Angle

Words & Photos by Steve McEvoy

Who doesn't love a fast Ford? You just have to go to any motorsport event across the country and, no matter how sparse the entries may be, you can just about guarantee that somewhere in that paddock or service there will be at least one of Henry's family cars enjoying a new lease of life with a hot engine, big brakes, wide arches and not very much of the already basic interior left.

Fords have always lent themselves well to this kind of use, producing huge numbers of inexpensive cars that used simple but durable underpinnings that could be replaced or upgraded easily. As such, old Fords have long been the firm favourite for home-brew rally car builds, most notably the Escort, but we mustn't forget its predecessor, the humble Anglia 105E.

This is where Robert and Olivia Coulter from Antrim come in, with their hot 105E familiar to many from events both here and on the Isle of Man. Robert has owned this old campaigner for twenty years, after some late-night plans were made in the bar of a Douglas hotel with a friend during a visit to the Isle of Man. I'm sure many of us have formulated a brilliant plan for a project build over a pint or two, only to forget all about it the next day, but when Robert got home he did actually set about bringing his idea to life. He sourced a solid shell as a basis, carried out the necessary repairs and set about building it to compete. The shell was solid where it mattered, with strong chassis rails and clean inner wings, so most of the work involved the sills and floorpans to get it ready for competition. A Safety Devices roll cage was added once the shell was solid enough to mount it, and then the late nights in the shed to build up the mechanicals could start.

Robert and Olivia at the Loughgall Festival of Motorsport last year, where they continued their winning ways with a Class 1A victory.

It might not be exactly concours, but the Coulters' Anglia 105E has been around the rally stages more often than most, and probably knows some of them by heart by now.

The front panel has [illegible] times, and now wears a smaller grille.



Anglia interiors are sparse at the best of times. If it's not needed, it's not there in this one.



Anti-roll bar and beam cutter aren't standard 105E adornments!



The front panel has been 'modified' a few times, and now wears a smaller grille.



1600E Cortina-type steering wheel is just the right size to throw the Anglia around on three wheels.



The co-driver's seat is kitted out with wiper controls, extinguisher and all-important pencil clips.



Olivia is lucky to live close to Nutts Corner, with plenty of room to play with the car. Watch out for her own Anglia when it debuts next year.



Teddy from the Isle of Man, where the plans for this hot 105E were formed.



Removing the glass and winding mechanisms saves a surprising amount of weight, and of course prevent glass splinters in an accident.



The Anglia hurtles through Loughgall Country Park in competition. *Photo by William Neill*

Donegal International Rally 2014



Words & Photos by William Neill

Gary McPhillips and Paul Sheridan won the National category by over a minute in their Modified-specification Ford Escort Mk2.

For those who appreciate classic rallying there is much to see at the Donegal International Rally once the main field pass through the stages. We take a closer look at the cars and how they performed...

One of the perennial favourites on the Irish rallying scene, this year's Donegal International took place from the 20th to the 22nd of June, based in Letterkenny and including legendary stages such as Fanad and Atlantic Drive. Seamus O'Connell and Mac Kierans were clear victors in the Historics this year, finishing almost five minutes clear of the pack in their Ford Escort Mk2. The triumphant team added to their winning tally on each stage to lead from start to finish, stopping the clocks 4 minutes and 55 seconds ahead of Andy Johnson and Jim McSherry's Vauxhall Chevette. Historic rally regulars Aidan O'Connor and Ian Regan finished third; the Mk1 Escort-mounted duo finished three minutes from the car ahead at the Letterkenny ramp, also claiming first in C3. The Ford Escort proved popular yet again with Stephen McFerran and James McKeefry in 4th, 43 seconds from a podium finish, but winning D5. John Coyne and Christy Farrell's Talbot Sunbeam was a welcomed addition to the field, breaking up the run of Escorts in fifth ahead of Philip and Lynn McKibbin's Mk1.

In the other classes, Brian Crawford and Finian Hannigan won D2 in a Talbot Sunbeam. A Lotus Cortina won B3 with Niall Creighton driving and Gregory Roberts reading the notes, while C2 was won by Hillman Avenger crew Harry Brown and Martin McGrath. Historic winner Seamus O'Connell's son, Tommy, didn't have as much luck as his dad, sustaining a puncture on the first stage and engine issues on stage four.

Monaghan's Gary McPhillips and Paul Sheridan made it another Donegal victory in the National class after claiming the same prize last year. The winning margin, although nothing like that of the Historics, was a fair lead with second-placed Conor Harvey and Gerard Callaghan a minute and 17 seconds behind. Fan favourite Frank Kelly and Liam Breenan made it an all-Escort podium. Road racing champion Michael Dunlop had his first taste of rallying, being among the first 20 National finishers on the opening day. Mechanical issues eventually forced a retirement, but he has hinted at a return to rallying nonetheless.

For details of the 2015 Donegal International Rally as they appear, visit www.donegalrally.ie.



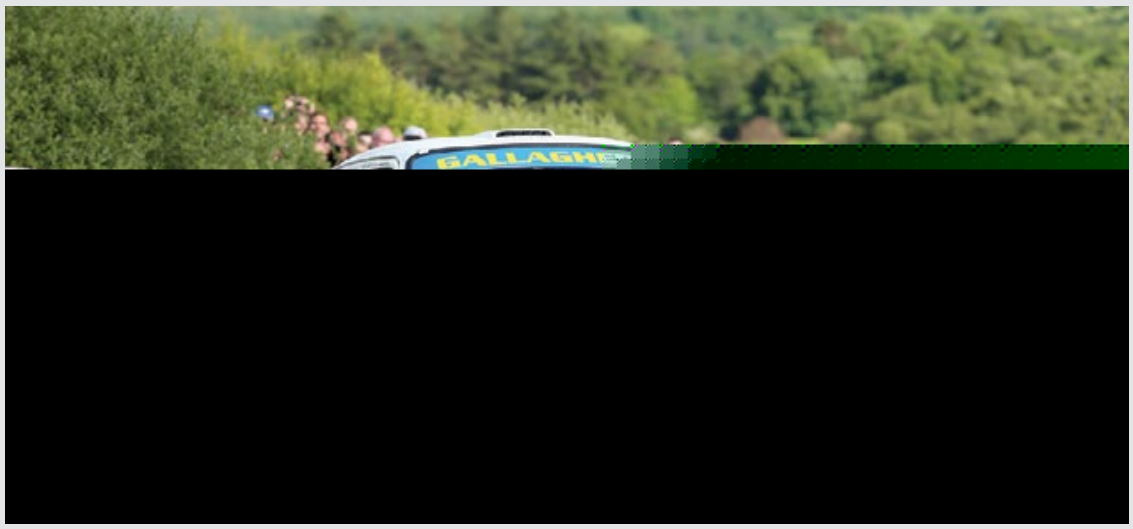
Historic winners Seamus O'Connell and Mac Kierans on the way to a victory of almost five minutes.



Hillman Avenger crew Harry Brown and Martin McGrath won C2.



Going sideways worked for Aidan O'Connor and Ian Regan – the pair won C3.



Paul and Patrick Gallagher's bubble-arched Ford Escort Mk1 on the limit.

Richard Moffett entertains the crowd on the way to winning C13 in a Toyota Starlet.

Monaghan's British Rally Championship contender Daniel McKenna was back in his Escort for the Donegal weekend.



The Corolla AE86 of Gary Gallagher and Lee Cullen lifts a wheel on the exit of a bend.



Patrick McHugh and Pauric O'Donnell lean into the first of the iconic Knockalla hairpins.

Motorcycle road-racer Michael Dunlop would like to return to rallying after his first taste at Donegal.



Spectators keep an eye on Philip and Lynn McKibbin's Mk1 Escort.

John Coyne and Christy Farrell had no time to enjoy the sea view as they passed in a Talbot Sunbeam.



Adrian McElhinney gets a little out of shape in his Ford Escort Mk2.



Escort Mk2 driver Garry McElhinney was as entertaining as ever in Donegal.

Roy Baldrick and Darren Harvey hurtle through the picturesque Knockalla stage in a Talbot Sunbeam.

Classic Car & Sports Car Show

Hosted by MX-5 Owners Club NI

Words & Photos by Reinis Babrovskis

The grounds of the Lisburn Rugby Club started to fill early on the morning of June 28th last, but this time the rugby players weren't going to be the stars of the day. MX-5 Club Northern Ireland were the driving force behind this Classic & Sports Car Show, and while this was only their second year of running this charity event they were determined to make it even bigger and better. The event was first hosted in 2013 in aid of the NI Children's Hospice, where the owners managed to raise the fine sum of £500.

Owners of the sporty convertible returned this year in much larger numbers, and dozens of examples of each generation of the famous Mazda MX-5 were present. Whether standard, modified and even race spec, everything was welcomed. Blessed with good weather, many of the owners enjoyed themselves at their portable grilles, reading books or chatting away to their fellow petrol-heads. The show organisers made sure that there was entertainment for the whole family; kids were enjoying the face-painting at the MX-5 stand, while the parents walked around the show enjoying the massive turn out of the Japanese cult car and lots of other classics besides. Some trade stalls made sure that owners wouldn't go home empty handed, with many retro parts, die-cast models, magazines and much more on offer. With a demo of his cleaning products as well as some detailing tips, the Nubawax representative made sure all owners could get their cars gleaming before the judges started to walk around. And, after the shopping was done and the wallets were a bit lighter, there was time for a quick ice cream.

Through midday the show became busier and busier, with more and more cars entering the pitch until it was filled with beautiful classics from all over the globe. From Minis, Land Rovers and MGs to Porsches and even American muscle, there was something for everybody. The motorcycle fans were not forgotten about either, with motor-powered bicycles to trikes on show. Even if it wasn't the biggest of the classic car shows in the country, this event was surrounded with a great atmosphere, which probably explains why, when the show ended, none of the car owners were in a rush to leave.

For further information on the MX-5 Owners Club NI, log onto www.mx5.co.uk.




Bressan's


HLJ 710N


RIJ 7


E196 FVT


JZ 9160


GIA 4014


NHZ 7123


BYU 641


HLJ 710N




VW 3198
CRZ 9449

Peugeot 205 GTI

Buyer's Guide

By John Cradden

It may have escaped your notice that this year is the 30th anniversary of the launch of the Peugeot 205 GTI, a car widely regarded as the definitive eighties hot hatch, and one that has also stood the test of time to rank as one of the best hot hatches of them all. The good news is that, while values have begun rising of late as the classic car market begins to wake up to the 205GTI's desirability, they are still relatively affordable and there are still plenty to choose from. Which is more than you can say for some of its near-extinct rivals. When was the last time you saw a Fiat Uno Turbo, Renault 5 GT Turbo or Opel Astra GTE Mk1? However, you'll still need to take care because there are also a lot of crash-repaired, neglected or modified examples out there, particularly at the cheaper end of the market. But fear not, we've done some of the homework for you.

BODYWORK

The 205 is quite rot-resistant, particularly compared to some of its peers, including VW Golfs. The only rust you might see is at the front of the rear wheel arches and at the bottom corners of the door frames. You might also find some rust around the battery tray if it is has leaked in the past, but otherwise it should be solid in there too. All the same, check that the body panels line up and that the bonnet closes easily and is a good fit. It may be French, but the 205's panel fit is said to be very good so anything that is not lining up could be an indication of accident damage, or at least poorly-repaired accident damage. It's also a good idea to pull up the carpets; not for rust but, again, to check for any unorthodox welding that might indicate a chequered history. Some GTI's have full-length sliding glass sunroofs with quite an elaborate mechanism; when you release the handle there should be hiss of air as the seal depressurises, allowing the glass to slide back. This seal is connected to the engine, and reseals when the engine is running to keep it air- and water-tight. Check for leaks, and check for water marks on the seats to see if it has been leaking in the past.



ENGINE

Try to inspect one of these cars when the engine is cold, so that you are more likely to spot any signs of blue or white smoke from the exhaust. While a little white smoke is probably just condensation, any blue smoke means (in most cases) that the engine will need new valve stem seals, which is apparently not an easy job. If the engine is higher mileage, definitely get a mate to look at what comes out of the exhaust pipe when you rev it. Starting the car might be a little more difficult than for modern cars, but it should catch first time. Owners will often tell you that the tickover might be all over the place when cold, but this is quite common and can be easily sorted. The oil pressure gauge should eventually settle to about the halfway mark when fully warm; any less could be a sign of wear or that the wrong oil is being used. Look also for oil leaks around the cylinder head, sump and from the distributor.



TRANSMISSION

The gearbox is not the toughest unit, so finding a car with a tired, notchy gear-change is not uncommon. However, be particularly wary of boxes with worn-out synchromesh on third and fourth gears. Clutch cables can get stiff, making for a heavy clutch action. Gear changes can also be stiff when the car is cold, but make sure you can select all the gears easily. If you've never driven a 205 GTI before you'll often notice the transmission 'shunting' when you lift off the accelerator, but this is normal.

SUSPENSION/STEERING/BRAKES

The most important thing to check out regarding the suspension is the rear beam. The bearings are prone to seizing, which puts undue strain on the bodyshell if driven like that for long periods. If this is the case, the rear beam will need replacing, or at least the bearings. Listen out for creaking at the rear end as you drive along. On a test drive, check that the car tracks straight, and find a space when where you can turn the car full-lock and listen for any knocking that might mean worn CV joints, track-rod ends, balljoints etc. Also check for perished driveshaft gaiters and any play in the steering rack. Braking should be straight and progressive, and any steering wobble on braking will mean warped brake discs. Tramlining could be caused by mismatched or unevenly worn tyres.

INTERIOR

The biggest complaint about the 205 GTI interior is that it feels fairly cheap and can develop a multitude of rattles and squeaks. Besides the usual visual clues as to wear and tear, check the padding on the driver's side bolster wings for heavy wear. The cloth seat coverings of the 1.6-litre models wear quite easily, and replacement trim is difficult to find - owners either have the seats re-trimmed by a specialists or find a set of half-leather seats from a 1.9 GTI. Some later special-edition GTIs came with full leather trim, along with the electric windows and central locking that were standard on 1.9s.



BUYING

While values of the best, unrestored examples are now hitting five figures, prices for 205 GTis at the cheaper end of the market are still a little all over the place, so it pays to be extremely fussy about what you buy if you have a budget of between €2k and €5k. Very good cars can be found for this amount, but beware the snake oil salesmen, whether private or trade, as you can very easily end up with a pile of trouble, whether it's a smoky engine, poorly-repaired crash damage, shells that are less than robust due to hard use or wear due to the infamous failed rear beam trouble. The good news is that there are still plenty around so you can be choosy, particularly if your budget is higher than €5k. And, unless you're happy to take on a project, buying a 205 GTI for anything less than €2k is probably a false economy.

CLUBS, SPECIALISTS

Www.205GTIdrivers.com is a fantastic source of grassroots, insider info on this car, delivered by those who live and breathe 205 GTIs. Peugeot Sport Club UK is another well-organised club catering for all Peugeots of a sporting temperament and is known to have some Irish-based members. In Ireland, some enthusiasts can be found on Backroads.ie, and others on local forum French Cars Ireland.







OUR PHOTO CAR

Morgan O'Shea demonstrated patience and determination in getting his hands on this particular 1.9 GTI. An ex-Gowan demonstrator previously owned by well-known photographer and classic rallying veteran Frank Fennell, it has just 44,000 miles on the clock and is in totally original, tiptop shape, bar a few very minor niggles to sort when Morgan gets the chance. Needless to say, he highly recommends finding the most original example you can, with as few owners as possible and ideally some history, but you may have to pay more for the privilege, just as he did with this one. For any example you are looking at, he advises looking and checking carefully for any crash or accident damage, and to inspect the condition of the rear beam. He also uses his sparingly, which is probably not a bad idea given how nice it is...



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2 Previous
Owners Motd to November
Taxd to 1st October
Fully Serviced Clean Tidy Car
£3650.00 ono
Antrim
Mobile No.: 077 36373601



Bradbury 4 Tonne 4 Post €2,500
with 2 Churchill Wheel Free Jacks – Option of 3 Phase or Single Phase This Bradbury Lift is situated and in service everyday. This lift can be seen working. New ropes were fitted to this lift approximately 18 months. Galway
Mobile No.: 087 2588929



Ford Capri for restoration - 1971 €2,700
5 speed manual 4 branch exhaust on 2.0 pinto twin choke webber carb 5 4-spoke capri alloy wheels. car will need to be fully restored but the body is in amazing condition
Cork
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BMW E21 323i Baur Convertible €5,950
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Galway
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Mini side walk - 1996 - €4,350
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Galway
Mobile No.: 087 7438824



Mercedes 350sl – €12,500
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Dublin
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Jaguar XJSC Convertible. 1985 €12,000
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